

terminals without performing speech encoding operations so that speech is encoded and decoded only in the terminals,” as recited in independent claim 1 and its dependent claims.

Similarly, the cited prior art fails to disclose, teach or suggest a centre in a digital telecommunication network configured to “receive information regarding supported one or more speech codecs of a calling terminal and connect a transcoder located in a transcoder unit to a call connection when required, wherein: the centre is configured to perform handshaking with another centre associated with a called terminal, the handshaking including indication of speech codecs supported by the calling terminal associated with the centre, the centre also being configured to choose the speech codec commonly used by the terminals. . .,” as recited in independent claim 14 and its dependent claims.

Tseng merely discloses a signaling method for achieving a tandem-free operation (TFO) in a mobile-to-mobile call (MMC) in a telecommunication system. Tseng’s centers are arranged to transmit capability signals to each other to indicate whether the centers are capable of transcoding (or cross transcoding, if needed). In Tseng’s inter-system TFO, in each system, the transcoders are always a part of the transmission path and transcoding is a default setting for the operation. Thus, the TFO of Tseng is MSC-driven, i.e., all the TFO negotiation disclosed in Tseng relates to whether the opposite MSC is capable of transcoding or cross transcoding. As a result, transcoders are bypassed by sending low frequency tone signals to opposing centers. However, Tseng fails to disclose, teach or suggest the idea of using appropriate low frequency tone signals for signaling the start of TFO operation.

The Office Action erroneously asserted that Tseng discloses that the terminals indicate their supported speech codecs to their associated switching centers (col. 4, lines 35-55, col. 6, line 45-col. 7, line 57). However, those passages, and Tseng’s teachings generally, fail to teach or suggest any activity, wherein a terminal would indicate its speech codecs to a switching center. Tseng merely discloses an inter-system (GSB/TDMA/CMDA) TFO operation, wherein the speech codecs of the terminals are system-dependent, i.e., the respective switching center are always aware of speech codecs supported by the terminals. Hence, in Tseng, there is no need to indicate the speech codecs supported by the terminals to the switching centers. Simply put, the terminals of Tseng do not participate in the selection of inter-MSC coding.

The Office Action also erroneously asserted that Tseng discloses a system wherein at least one of the first and second centers is configured to choose the speech codec used commonly by the calling and called terminals. To the contrary, Tseng’s centers only receive

an indication whether the center on the opposite side is capable of transcoding or cross transcoding; thus, Tseng's centers do not choose any codec for the terminals to use.

Accordingly, Tseng fails to disclose, teach or suggest the present invention, wherein a TFO negotiation is terminal-driven, i.e., the speech codecs supported by the terminals are indicated to the MSCs, and in the TFO negotiation, transcoders are only connected, if no commonly supported speech codec is found.

Valentine fails to remedy these deficiencies of Tseng because discloses a method for adapting speech codec algorithms on a telecommunication connection including multiple different speech codecs. The originating network and the terminating network perform handshaking, which indicates the codecs used by the originating network/terminal and the terminating network/terminal. If the codecs are different, the speech codec algorithms of both codecs are adapted to produce a best fit encoding matching. Consequently, Valentine does not relate to choose a speech codec for a tandem-free MMC.

Similarly, Lev fails to remedy the deficiencies of Tseng, analyzed individually or in combination with Valentine, because Lev merely discloses a signaling method for avoiding multiple transcoder format conversions, wherein an MMC request is identified by the mobile communication system and in response to said identification, the transcoders are instructed to operate in transparent mode, thus allowing the TFO of the mobile communication system during a MMC. Thus, Lev does not relate to choosing a speech codec for a tandem-free MMC.

As a result, the claimed invention is patentable over the cited prior art references because their combined teachings fail to provide wherein transcoder units each include speech codecs and each of the terminals comprises one or more speech codecs, the terminals being arranged to provide information regarding the supported one or more speech codecs to their associated switching centres and centres are configured to perform handshaking with other centres associated with a called terminal, the handshaking including indication of speech codecs supported by the calling terminal associated with the centre, the centre also being configured to choose the speech codec commonly used by the terminals. Accordingly, claims 1-17 are patentable over Tseng, Valentine and Lev.

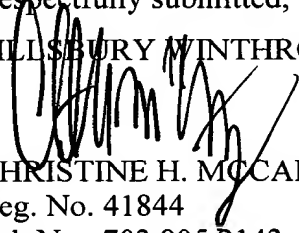
All rejections and objections having been addressed, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is now in condition for allowance, and a notice to that effect is earnestly solicited. Should there be any questions or concerns regarding this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

VERKAMA -- 09/830,028
Client/Matter: 083531-0279295

Please charge any fees associated with the submission of this paper to Deposit Account Number 033975. The Commissioner for Patents is also authorized to credit any over payments to the above-referenced Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

PILLSBURY WINTHROP SHAW PITTMAN LLP



CHRISTINE H. MCCARTHY

Reg. No. 41844

Tel. No. 703 905.2143

Fax No. 703 905.2500

Date: August 23, 2005
P.O. Box 10500
McLean, VA 22102
(703) 905-2000